

NEWS RELEASE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

Commissioner Claire DeMatteis

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DOC updates COVID recoveries, cases, and enhanced services for inmates

Dover, DE -- The Delaware Department of Correction (DOC) today announced that inmate recoveries from COVID have reached 44 - an increase of 10 since earlier this week - as the Department expands access to technology for inmates housed in its COVID-19 treatment center at James T. Vaughn Correctional Center (JTVCC). This past week the DOC upgraded wiring in the treatment center to support the use of electronic tablets. To supplement telephone access, the tablets provide inmate COVID patients the opportunity to initiate video visits with loved ones and to access video entertainment and educational programming from their cells.

"Today, only 16 inmate COVID patients are experiencing symptoms of illness, while 70 inmates with positive test results, who were identified through proactive testing, are asymptomatic with no fever, cough, shortness of breath or other symptom of the virus," **Commissioner Claire DeMatteis said.** "All inmates in the treatment center, infirmary or area hospital are receiving round-the-clock monitoring and care. We also have taken steps to make them comfortable and keep them connected to loved ones, including through the use of hand-held tablets, which are similar to iPads. We will continue our rigorous efforts to screen, clean, test, isolate, treat and trace to prevent widespread contamination of the coronavirus."

[Earlier this week, the DOC highlighted the significant reduction in the state's incarcerated population since COVID-19 spread to Delaware eight weeks ago, driven by a 25% reduction in the pre-trial detentioner population and a 33% decrease in its work release/violation of probation population.](#) Over the same time, it has worked with criminal justice partners to facilitate more than 1,300 video court proceedings for individuals held in DOC custody to keep the wheels of justice turning during the state's COVID-19 response.

The DOC also today announced additional inmate and staff test results. Review an informational chart of positive COVID-19 cases among DOC employees, contracted staff and inmates for each DOC facility [by clicking HERE](#). The latest positive test results are as follows:

- **Six inmates from minimum and medium security buildings at JTVCC that have been monitored closely for weeks, including twice daily forehead temperature checks for inmates in these buildings.** All were identified and isolated at the first sign of illness through proactive screening and five of the test results came through rapid COVID

testing on-site. Five are being housed in the JTVCC COVID-19 treatment center and one is being treated in an area hospital in stable condition.

- **Two inmates from Howard R. Young Correctional Institution (HRYCI).** One was tested at the first sign of illness through proactive monitoring and one received a COVID test while undergoing treatment for non-COVID symptoms at an area hospital. Both have been transferred to the JTVCC COVID-19 treatment center. [These inmates likely had contact with the source of the initial HRYCI inmate COVID case that was identified through contact tracing.](#)
- **Eight Correctional Officers assigned to Howard R. Young Correctional Institution (HRYCI).** The Officers were last on duty between 13 days and 4 days ago. Five Officers were asymptomatic and obtained voluntary proactive testing after coming into contact with potential COVID-positive individuals. All remain asymptomatic. Three Officers began self-isolating and obtained COVID testing after experience flu-like symptoms. All eight Officers continue to self-isolate at home.
- **Three Correctional Officers assigned to JTVCC.** The Officers were last on duty 10 days ago - on April 28, 9 days ago - on April 29, and 8 days ago - on April 30, respectively. After beginning to experience flu-like symptoms, the Officers began to self-isolate at home, and as symptoms developed sought medical attention, at which time a COVID-19 test was administered. The Officers are continuing to self-isolate at home.

No additional information will be provided about the identity of the inmates and officers for privacy protection.

The DOC is employing a variety of prevention, screening, cleaning and containment measures to guard against the spread of the novel coronavirus, including:

- All persons, including Officers, administrative staff and probationers who enter any Level V prison, Level IV violation of probation or work release center, or Probation and Parole Office are screened for COVID-19, including a series of questions and a forehead temperature check with a thermometer
- Staff who present with symptoms are sent home to self-quarantine and directed to contact their health care provider.
- Newly arriving inmates are held in isolation for the first 14 days, during which they are carefully monitored, including daily temperature checks with a thermometer.
- DOC has implemented extra daily cleaning of DOC facilities and is using specialized fogging machines to disinfect entire rooms of common areas, housing units and workspaces.
- Face masks are being worn by Correctional Officers and contract healthcare workers as a protection for inmates, Officers and other employees. All Correctional Officers have been wearing face masks since April 10.

- **Face masks have been provided to more than half of DOC's inmate population, including inmates who are in infirmaries, those with compromised immune systems, those with certain institutional jobs, such as food service, all inmates at the James T. Vaughn Correctional Center and the Sussex Community Corrections Center and nearly 250 inmates at Howard R. Young Correctional Institution.**
- Most Probationer visits with Probation Officers were transitioned to phone check-ins in March to support social distancing measures.

In addition, the DOC has temporarily suspended in-person prison programming to reduce the movement of people into facilities and movement of groups of people within facilities. Certain programs, including treatment and education programs and religious programming, have been transitioned to a virtual video format. Inmates continue to have outside recreation opportunities within their confined areas and continue to have access to phones to stay in regular contact with their loved ones. DOC is also expanding the use of electronic tablets among the inmate population, where available.

Get updated information about the DOC's response to COVID-19 and read previous announcements of positive COVID-19 cases by visiting <https://doc.delaware.gov>, and follow *decorrection* on Facebook and Twitter.

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